

Action Words

Different questions require different types of answers. To figure out what type of response is expected, focus on the action words.

Analyze	Divide the idea into parts. Show how the parts are related.
Compare	Tell what is similar or different about two or more subjects.
Contrast	Tell what is different about two or more subjects.
Define	Give the meaning of the term in the context of the subject matter.
Describe	Write a detailed account of the subject.
Discuss	Examine a topic carefully and completely. Present pro and con perspectives.
Explain	Interpret the material. Express the interpretation in a clear, thorough manner.
List	Present the information in bits. Go point by point, and be concise.
Outline	Give a brief, to-the-point overview of a topic. Present the information in an orderly, structured manner.
Review	Thoroughly cover the major points of a topic. Organize information in sequence.
State	Tell in a straightforward, brief manner.
Summarize	Give the basic points of a topic. Omit details.